

# California Breezes

COLUMN LEFT

## Memories...

**W**hen I got home the other day, checking my mailbox, hoping *not* to find any new bills (you know the ones, stamped with that warning, "URGENT! REQUIRES IMMEDIATE ATTENTION!") I was surprised to find a letter from a high school classmate I haven't seen from, much less thought about for twenty years. One Jerry Romanko, or Gerald, as we knew him then, took the time to write and inform me that he had heard a rumor at our recent high school reunion that I had become a priest (of all things!), and that he wanted to know if this was true. I was so delighted in hearing from someone who had attended the reunion, that I immediately got on the phone and called him. Luckily he was home (like all 38 year old dental technicians should be) and soon we were chatting away about the reunion, classmates, what they were doing, who had died, and so on. I have not kept up with any of my old classmates, and didn't really feel guilty about that, but when Jerry and I connected on this Tuesday evening, I was excited to hear about the Cherry Hill Class of '74, and the prospects of a 25 year reunion done in grand style. The 20th, I found out, was held at the Dearborn Elks Lodge, a small and rather ordinary hall that couldn't accommodate too well the number of people that showed up. The music was too loud to allow for good conversation, and the event slipped by all too quickly for Jerry's taste.

All the while I was talking with him, I had this twenty year old picture of him in my head. I am sure that he looks somewhat different today, but exactly how, I don't know. From what he told me, those who did show up were aging rather normally. The ones who were fat in high school were still fat, and the ones who were in good shape were still that way. Some hair loss or graying was to be expected, but all in all, people still haven't shown dramatic physical change.



Just about everyone had married with two or three kids, and when Jerry asked me if I was married, I simply told him, no, that I was still single. The fact that we had this conversation on October 11th, "National Coming Out Day", there probably was some irony to my *not* coming out to him.

In thinking about that Class of '74, I wondered perhaps if we weren't a bunch of underachievers. It didn't sound like anyone had become wealthy or famous, or even infamous. A few had settled in West

Bloomfield, so they must be doing pretty well for themselves, but most have stayed in and around the southwest part of the state. Only two of us moved to this coast, a few to Ohio (why?) and a few to the other coast. I think that twenty years ago, had those in my circle of friends predicted where we would be in 1994, and doing what, most of us would have missed the mark by a long shot. I have come to realize that life has a habit of taking us down unexpected paths, a journey too mysterious to predict with accuracy. In high school we were idealistic dreamers, and perhaps not quite ready for the realities of life on our own. I think that there is value in the fact that where life leads us is unpredictable at times. Mystery, surprise, excitement--these are wonderful ingredients of the journeys we take.

Anyway, having missed my 20th, I am resolved to make the next one, and it will be interesting to see where I and the rest of us will be in five years. I predict that I will be working on my first novel, living in a beautiful home on the fashionable westside of Los Angeles, and cooking gourmet meals for the friends who happen to drop by. And that's one prediction you can take to the bank!



### HOUSTON

### Musings From the Mind...

**R**eturning from New Jersey on Monday afternoon and being faced with 90 degree temperatures we were brought back to the reality of Texas. While leaves were changing to shades of yellow, gold, red, and orange, and starting to fall from the grasp of the trees, and while cool breezes turned back the clock to growing up in Michigan when four seasons were more than just a 60's group, and these changes meant that Thanksgiving and Christmas were not too far off, we arrived back to the sultry climes of Houston, where we have only two seasons—*nice*, and *nice and hot*. After a week where roads traveled passed through one scenic route after another, mile and mile of hot concrete greeted us from the terminal. But, it was nice to get unpacked and to get back to the comfort of our own bed, along with the soothing drone of the box fan to lull me asleep.



How lucky both Lynn and Woody are to have each other, as unless they put on a convincing act, they both seemed to have devoted their lives to each other. Lynn, you never have been any happier, it was obvious in your demeanor during the week we were there! Woody, ever calm and collected (a nice contrast to Lynn!), seemed at peace with the world, despite the very important step they both were about to make. This was my initial meeting of Woody, and after just a short time, I felt as if I had known him for a long time. He opened up his house to a bunch of strangers and treated us all so very well—like his own family! Anyway, the wedding was so nice, and the reception a lot of fun, especially for the kids there. That's the way all weddings should be done—fun for all who attend!

I have a kind of observation about the family reunion. Most of us traveled in from different parts of the country to see brothers and sisters, cousins, aunts and uncles, not to mention a mother and father that some of us hardly ever get to see more than once a year, and yet it seemed that for the most part, no one was really too interested in finding out how things were going in all our lives. Is it because we have become so blasé about each other, just being satisfied with knowing that everyone is doing *just fine*, instead of really being so happy to see each other? We have *always* been

like this—never getting much past the superficialities of conversation, not because we do not have sufficient time, but rather, because we do not take sufficient time! Perhaps we are too independent of each other, needing to know only the minimum of our lives' details, as long as we are all healthy and happy. No one feels like their lives are very interesting, and so no one else would care to hear all the little details that make up their daily routines. Yet, it does make for interesting reading when exposed in this newsletter! So, why can we not show our interest and concern for each other when we have these infrequent reunions? I do not place the blame on any one family member, because I am just as guilty as the rest. But when non-blood family members comment on this peculiarity of the Schneiders, it makes me wonder as well.

Life around here is now getting back to normal, with the daily routine of the job, eating, and sleeping. Stefanie just loves to play with Arianna, usually to the point of aggravating her (which aggravates me!), and we are waiting for the weather to turn more fall-like so we can go out for some exercise. Frinee's pregnancy has always been delicate, but the trip was a physical stresser for her. Arianna would not leave her alone, always wanting Frinee to carry her, plus all the walking we did in New York City. So, she has to really take it easy for the next three months to prevent a premature birth of our child.



We have decided on the names: **Ryan Gregory** and **Marissa Ann**. This was the most difficult decision on names we ever had to make! Excellent name combinations that please both parents are difficult when you have most of the good ones taken by relatives. But we finally came up with these as the ones. Hope we have a boy! Frinee will schedule an ultrasound in the near future to determine the gender, and to make sure everything is fine with the fetus. Perhaps with the next

Preheat oven to 350 F. Divide bread cubes between 2 large baking sheets. Bake until slightly dry, about 15 minutes. Cool completely.

Sauté sausages in heavy large skillet over medium-high heat until cooked through, crumbling coarsely with back of spoon, about 10 minutes. Using slotted spoon, transfer sausage to large bowl. Pour off any drippings from skillet. Melt butter in same skillet over medium-high heat. Add leeks, apples, celery and poultry seasoning to skillet; sauté until leeks soften, about 8 minutes. Mix in dried cranberries and rosemary. Add mixture to sausage, then mix in bread and parsley. Season stuffing to taste with salt and pepper. (*Can be prepared 1 day ahead. Cover and refrigerate.*) Mix eggs into stuffing.

**TO BAKE STUFFING IN TURKEY:** Fill main turkey cavity with stuffing. Mix enough chicken broth into remaining stuffing to moisten (about 3/4 to 1 cup chicken broth, depending on amount of remaining stuffing). Spoon remaining stuffing into buttered aluminum foil. Bake stuffing in dish alongside turkey until heated through, about 45 minutes. Uncover stuffing and bake until top is golden brown, about 15 minutes.

**TO BAKE ALL STUFFING IN PAN:** Preheat oven to 350 F. Butter 15x10x2-inch baking dish. Mix 1-1/3 cups broth into stuffing. Transfer to prepared dish. Cover with buttered foil and bake until heated through, about 45 minutes. Uncover and bake until top is golden brown, about 15 minutes.

### Stuffing vs. Dressing

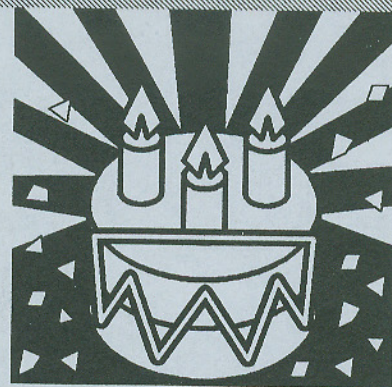
The difference between stuffing and dressing is very much like the difference between those two tomatoes in that well-loved Cole Porter tune—not much.

Today the terms are often used interchangeably, although many people insist there is a difference. They say that stuffing is the starch dish cooked *inside* the turkey, and dressing is cooked *alongside* it in a baking pan.

But it actually depends upon whom you ask. Many residents of the East and South are likely to call it *dressing*, no matter how it's prepared. Perhaps that's because Easterners and Southerners have stronger ties to their Victorian pasts than those in other parts of the country—and *dressing* is a term that comes to us from the Victorians.

The English named the first stuffing/dressing, calling it *forcemeat* (from the French *farcir*, meaning "to stuff"). A combination of ground meat, spices and herbs, it was tightly packed into poultry and sliced and served as part of the bird. Unlike forcemeat, stuffing (the word itself first appeared in print in the fifteenth century) was scooped out and served with the bird. By the late nineteenth century, however, Victorian society thought the term *stuffing* too indelicate and started using *dressing* as a respectable alternative.

Whatever you call it or however you cook it, stuffing/dressing is a big Thanksgiving favorite. It would be virtually impossible to have the holiday without this dish. So, what's in a name, anyway?

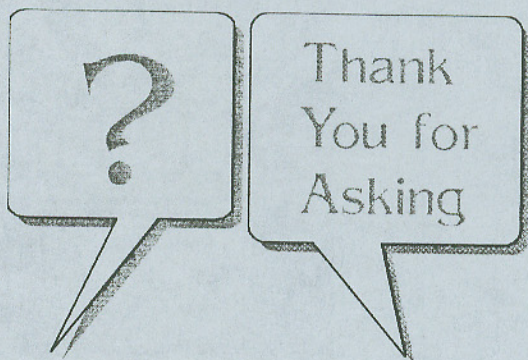


**Happy Birthday  
to Stephanie  
(October 24th),  
and to Devin  
(October 25th)!!**

### Kris Kringle Tradition to Continue in '94?

Thanksgiving is the traditional time of year that names are drawn for our family gift exchange. This is because many of us gather from near and far around the table to celebrate with a huge meal, some football action, and the usual catching up on family matters. While the names may be drawn arbitrarily, oftentimes we are left wondering what to get that person whose name was selected for us. In the next edition of *California Breezes*, I can publish some "hints" on what is needed or desired. If you would like to have your needs or desires published, please submit them to me no later than November 30, the deadline for monthly printing. Don't forget to include clothing sizes...





## Birthday Survey

Every month I would like to recognize those who have birthdays or anniversaries. I don't know everyone's birthdate or anniversary date, so please fill out this form and send it back. I hate to leave anyone out, and hurt any feelings!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

DOB \_\_\_\_\_

Anniv \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

DOB \_\_\_\_\_

Anniv \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

DOB \_\_\_\_\_

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

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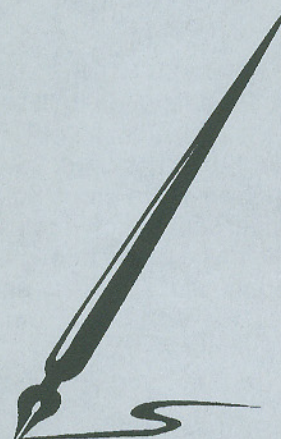
- JUST BEFORE going to press, Greg called to announce that they are going to have a son. The ultrasound was done, thus ending the mystery and the agonizing over names. So, Ryan Gregory will be arriving on the scene around the end of this year. (Yeah, get that tax break while you can!)

- LOOKS LIKE Thanksgiving will be somewhat traditional for me, as I expect to be helping to prepare a big meal for some friends who have no family to celebrate with. I will be at my friend Tim's apartment, and will probably have four or five others there to devour the turkey, stuffing, and everything else that goes along with this great day!

- HAVE NOT HEARD from Lynn and Woody about their honeymoon to Lake Tahoe. So, how come you guys have been so quiet about it??

- I AM HAPPY to welcome Uncle Jim to the list of those receiving this newsletter. The quietest one of the family will be kept abreast of what goes on, and I hope he will contribute something to this ink-stained rag once in a while. I am sure he would have some interesting perspectives or anecdotes to share.

- REACH OUT AND TOUCH SOMEONE: Lately having received many hang-up calls from some sick individual, I have asked Pacific Bell to put a trap on my phone, in order to find out who is doing this, and to have him arrested. It is a misdemeanor to harass by phone, and I had the sheriffs over to the house to take a report on it. Hopefully, with the way this joker keeps calling, erasing messages, announcements, and just being a pest, we will nail him soon.



## California Breezes

newsletter we will be able to announce who our next child will be: Ryan or Marissa.

We are having estimates taken to have the two kids' bedrooms wallpapered by an outsider, since that is one job I cannot ever master, and do not care to even try anymore. After spending time in Jim's and Lynn/Woody's houses, I have realized even more how much we have to do to make our home prettier. My problem is that I have difficulty in finishing jobs once I start them. I am mentally ready to go onto something else before the job is totally completed.

I am getting some of my photos enlarged this week after sifting through them. Copies desired by others in the family will be sent on as soon as possible. Hopefully, Lynn and Woody will get back photos taken at the wedding and reception soon, and I am anxious to see the family shot and get my copy. Anyone with good shots of my own family is encouraged to send me copies with the bill, please.



## You Can Feel It in the Air!

Signs that fall is here:

1. Cool, crisp air, and the sweaters that come out of the moth balls again.
2. You begin to think about going apple-picking!
3. Football on the tube.
4. Wives complaining about football being on the tube.
5. Malls decorated for Christmas sales.
6. Storm windows get pulled from the garage.

7. Resolutions to get Christmas shopping done early this year are made.

8. Leaves turn, fall, and get raked up.

(Remember when we used to *burn* them?)

9. Beach blankets are put away for another year.

10. Department stores start advertising their spring wear collections.

## The Ultimate Thanksgiving

Recipe and accompanying article excerpted from Bon Appetit magazine, November, 1994.

## New England Sausage, Apple, and Dried Cranberry Stuffing

14 SERVINGS (ABOUT 18 CUPS)

14 oz. white bread, cut into 3/4-inch cubes (about 12 cups)

1 lb. sweet Italian Sausages, casings removed

1/4 cup (1/2 stick) butter

6 cups sliced leeks (white and pale green parts only; about 3 large leeks)

1 lb. tart green apples, peeled, cored, chopped

2 cups chopped celery with leaves

4 teaspoons poultry seasoning

1 cup dried cranberries (about 4 ounces)

4 teaspoons chopped fresh rosemary

2/3 cup chopped fresh parsley

3 eggs, beaten to blend

1 1/3 cups (about) canned low-salt chicken broth